



# QUARTERLY UPDATE

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## Core to College Overview

Core to College is a multi-state grant initiative designed to promote strong collaboration between higher education and the K-12 sectors in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and aligned assessments. Core to College is funded by [Rockefeller Philanthropy Associates](#) with technical assistance provided by [Education First](#).

## Updates

### Curriculum Alignment

With the support of the Tennessee Board of Regents and University of Tennessee, faculty alignment teams were formed to assess and align the K-12 Common Core State Standards to credit bearing, entry level courses in English and Math. Each team has created curricular resources to assist professors in voluntarily aligning coursework to the more rigorous expectations of the Common Core.

### Curriculum Councils

Eight regional Curriculum Councils were formed in partnership with the Tennessee Department of Education Centers of Regional Excellence (CORE) Offices to promote better communication and relationships between K-12 and higher education regarding Common Core implementation.

### Engaging the Community

Read below to learn more about how Core to College has been engaging the community-at-large beyond alignment and council work.

### Additional Resources

Check out these resources for additional information regarding state and national Common Core implementation.

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## Curriculum Alignment Update

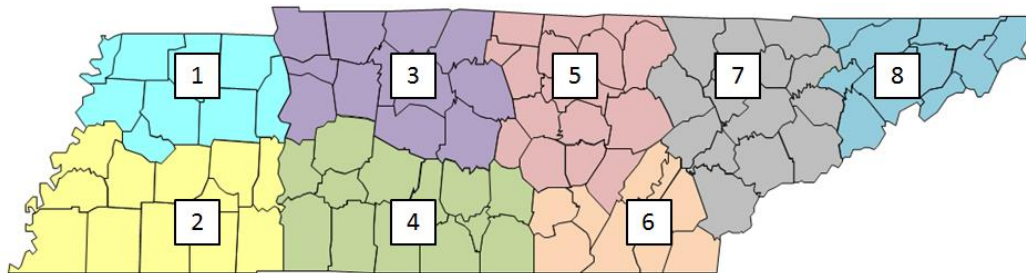
- The curriculum teams for English and Math have met regularly since April 2013 to develop course profiles and supplementary curricular materials for Core-Aligned College Algebra and Expository Writing courses. Below you can find more specific updates on the current status for each content area.
    - English:
      - The final draft of a course profile and sample modules for a [Core-Aligned Expository Writing](#) course were reviewed by external evaluators from 10 institutions and revised according to their feedback.
      - The course is currently being pre-piloted to gather feedback from educators on the utility of the materials at Nashville State Community College and the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga.
      - The faculty team is planning a two-day training this summer in advance of a larger scale pilot of the course in the fall. We are currently in negotiations with various institutions regarding their participating in the pilot.
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- Math:
  - The math team presented the course profile for a [Core-Aligned College Algebra](#) course to the Tennessee Council for Chairs of Mathematics last November. The council decided to pilot the various tasks at their institutions and provide feedback this spring.
  - The faculty team is planning several one-day trainings this summer for interested faculty across the state.

Visit the [Curriculum Alignment website](#) for more details!

## Curriculum Councils Update

- Eight P-16 Curriculum Councils have been formed in partnership with the Department of Education's CORE Offices. Note: East TN and First TN were recently restructured to better align with the CORE regions.



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|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Northwest      | 5. Upper Cumberland |
| 2. Southwest      | 6. Southeast        |
| 3. Mid Cumberland | 7. East TN          |
| 4. South Central  | 8. First TN         |

- In October, each of the regional P-16 councils met for a day-long meeting to discuss regional areas of need and develop action plans to address them.
- Each council determined to improve regional communication pathways through regular convenings and websites.
- Specific information on the progress of each council's work can be found on the [Curriculum Council website](#). Outlined below is an overview of regional projects:

<b>Northwest</b>	Engage in action planning around PARCC Implementation.
<b>Southwest</b>	Align Literacy Instruction (position paper on need for secondary pre-service literacy instruction, crosswalk of methods courses/K-12 PD, TEAM aligned reading instruction rubric).
<b>Mid Cumberland</b>	Organize CCSS Professional Development for Arts and Science Faculty and develop formative assessment item banks aligned to CCSS.
<b>South Central</b>	Create a regional student teaching handbook.
<b>Upper Cumberland</b>	Revive and expand the Upper Cumberland Teachers Council to provide targeted professional development.
<b>Southeast</b>	Convene Math, English, and Guidance Alignment Councils regularly to engage and educate teachers/faculty across the P-16 spectrum.
<b>East TN</b>	Develop a CCSS-aligned unit plan repository for K-12 and Colleges of Education.
<b>First TN</b>	Engage in targeted efforts to align Interdisciplinary Writing and Accountability Measures across the P-16 spectrum.

Visit the [Curriculum Council website](#) for more details and dates of future regional convenings!

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## Engaging the Community

- Core to College was featured in an Ed Week article entitled, “[‘Transitional’ Courses Catch On as College-Prep Strategy](#).” The article focuses on the current trend of utilizing transitional courses as a strategy to ensure a more seamless shift for students as they move from K-12 into higher education and features how the alignment work around the Common Core fits into the overall landscape of those student transitions. Melissa Stugart, the Core to College Director, was quoted regarding the many efforts Tennessee has made around improving collaboration between our education sectors.
- Melissa Stugart participated in a panel discussion on collaboration between K-12 and higher education at the [American Association of School Administrators’ National Conference on Education](#). The conference brought together officials from K-12 and higher education to discuss a recent report entitled, “[The Collaborative Imperative](#),” that highlighted the challenges and urgency of collaboration between the two sectors. Also included on the panel were Dr. Melinda Boone, Superintendent of Worchester Public Schools in Massachusetts, Dr. Nancy Shapiro, Associate Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the University System of Maryland, and Dr. Jubal Yennie, Director of Schools for Sullivan County in Tennessee.

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## Additional Resources

- *Achieve*: In partnership with Achieve, the Council of Chief State School Officers and Education Counsel have developed [State Transition to High-Quality, College/Career-Ready Assessments: A Workbook for State Action on Key Policy, Legal and Technical Issues](#) to provide states with a workbook to inform their transition to high-quality, CCR assessments, with a particular focus on the policy, legal and technical decisions states must address. This workbook (along with state team meetings and other supports) is meant to help each state evaluate its current readiness for this important transition, identify priority issues for state action and develop a work plan to guide assessment transition over time. Achieve will continue to revise and expand the workbook as appropriate to keep information updated and relevant.
  - *Center for American Progress*: [A Guide to the Common Core State Standards - State Fact Sheets](#) To better frame the conversation about the role of the Common Core, the Center for American Progress has compiled a series of 14 fact sheets on states implementing the Common Core. The series documents the current state of student achievement, demonstrates the imperative on why higher standards are important, and offers a side-by-side comparison on how the Common Core State Standards will raise student achievement.
  - *Council of the Great City Schools*: [Communicating the Common Core State Standards: A Resource for Superintendents, School Board Members and Public Relations Executives](#) (October 2013) This guide includes recommendations for key elements of a successful communications plan about the Common Core, including content (messages), spokespeople (key and secondary messengers) and delivery (strategies and tactics). It offers sample resources and materials from Council member districts and partner organizations. Finally, it includes a closer look at *Raise the Bar Louisville*, the public engagement campaign led by Jefferson County Public Schools in Kentucky, the first state to begin implementation of the Common Core State Standards.
  - *Education First*: [A Primer on Common Core-Aligned Assessments](#) Education First has been working closely with state leaders, foundations and other organizations to help provide information, analysis and strategic support to facilitate sound decision-making and implementation of high-quality, Common Core-aligned assessments. This primer distills and synthesizes the key issues involved, and provides the most up-to-date resource on the content, use, purpose and quality of current state tests and PARCC, Smarter Balanced and ACT Aspire.
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- *Education Week:* A [Common Core Status Tracker](#) developed by Education Week tracks the development in various states of legislation seeking withdrawal from the Common Core State Standards. The tracker also provides a short synopsis and a timeline of recent actions for each bill. The site allows viewers to customize alerts to follow the progress/status of particular bills.
- *Education Week:* [ACT to Drop 'Explore' and 'Plan' Tests](#) ACT Inc., is offering its Explore and Plan tests for the last time this school year as it gears up to debut a new suite of tests for grades 3-11 that are aimed at capturing a big chunk of the common-standards testing market. ACT intends its new Aspire system to fill the holes created by the disappearance of Plan and Explore, as well as those created by states' shifts to new Common Core assessments. Aspire, which will be available this coming spring, is being pitched aggressively to states as an alternative to PARCC and Smarter Balanced, which will be available in the spring of 2015. The Aspire system will cost states \$20 per student for five subject areas: mathematics, science, reading, writing, and English. That's less than the price estimates PARCC (\$29.50) and Smarter Balanced (about \$22 or \$27, depending on the package) have issued for their tests in English language arts and math. Aspire will be given online, although paper-and-pencil versions will be available for an extra \$5 to \$6 per student.
- *Education Week:* [New Tools Gauge Fidelity of Lessons to Common Core](#) Several new tools have been designed to help teachers and leaders gauge alignment to the Common Core State Standards. EQUIP (Educators Evaluating Quality Instructional Products), originated with the work of three states-Massachusetts, New York and Rhode Island-that designed a set of criteria to use in judging lessons and units for alignment with the standards. Other tools or processes designed to evaluate instructional materials for Common Core alignment include free portals by the two teachers' unions where teachers can post and comment on lessons, and a set of free online tools by Student Achievement Partners that can be used to judge the fidelity of instructional materials to the standards. For-profit groups-like the Austin, Texas-based Learning List, which uses panels of judges to size up instructional materials-are also wading into the alignment-evaluation business, and the Business Roundtable is talking with partners about creating a group to do "Consumer Reports-type reviews" of Common Core materials. Finally, a group of experts led by Maria M. Klawe, the president of Harvey Mudd College, is creating a nonprofit to review the most widely used Common Core math materials.
- *Education Week:* [States Grapple with Common Test-Score Cutoffs](#) The two common assessment consortia are taking early steps to align the "college readiness" achievement levels on their tests with the rigorous proficiency standard of the National Assessment of Educational Progress. This move is expected to set many states up for a steep drop in scores since fewer than four in 10 children reached the "proficient" level on the 2013 NAEP in reading and math. Facing that music on yet another round of tests will be politically painful for the many states planning to use the Common Core exams being developed by the Smarter Balanced and PARCC in 2015. However, it appears unlikely that students themselves will feel the sting right away because states are taking a wait-and-see approach to attaching individual-level student stakes-such as high school graduation or grade-to-grade promotion-to those high cutoff scores.
- *Institute of Politics, University of Chicago:* **Video** [Implementing the Common Core: The Politics and Promise of Higher Learning Standards](#) What is the Common Core? Does it represent a federal overreach? What challenges and opportunities does it present for students, teachers, administrators and parents? And how is it playing out in classrooms in Illinois? In this video, recorded October 24, 2013, we hear from key education stakeholders about how the Common Core standards will shape the country's challenging-and changing-education landscape. Interviews with U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Frederick Hess, director of education policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute, are followed by a panel discussion and audience Q&A.
- *National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP):* [Leadership for Common Core](#) NAESP released [two surveys](#) in December 2013 that examined principals' views of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) initiative, as well as their preparation and ongoing support for implementation of the higher standards. The surveys, which reflect the views of 1,000 principals in 14 states that have adopted CCSS, reveal that principals overwhelmingly support the CCSS initiative and have a strong willingness to continue to engage deeply in instructional leadership activities as states move forward with the new standards.

- **PARCC:** [PARCC Sample Test Questions Now Ready for Computer Practice](#) PARCC has posted sample test items for every grade on the testing platform students will use when taking the field test later this spring. This means teachers, students, parents and others will be able to engage with the sample items using computer-based tools such as drag-and-drop, multiple select, text highlighting, and an equation builder. PARCC also released online tutorials that demonstrate how students will navigate the test; how to use the computer-based tools; and features that make the test more accessible for all students, including those with disabilities and English learners.
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